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Drugs Used as Well STATINTL

Will American-Made Computers Help Soviets Put Down Dissent?

By PAUL SCOTT

The proposed sale of large, modern American computers to the Soviet Union has raised an explosive moral issue in addition to a security one for the Nixon Administration.

The moral question, now being sharply debated at the highest levels of the government, involves whether the U.S. should provide the Kremlin computers that can be used to tighten government control over the lives of Soviet citizens and to help suppress the growing political dissent in that country.

In an article being carefully studied at the White House, the distinguished expert on Soviet affairs, Victor Zorza, described the growth of the massive computerized information system in Russia and the way Soviet planners intend to use it as a weapon of thought control. Zorza wrote:

"...The main purpose of such system would be to prevent any disloyal ideas from even taking shape in the heads of Soviet citizens.... The full records of his psychological characteristics and actions could be used to devise an approach that would quickly persuade him...that his best interests require him to conform to the political guidance of his spiritual adviser at the KGB [the Soviet secret police.]"

The Zorza report, along with other information gathered by the Central Intelligence Agency, clearly shows how the power of a computerized information system, coupled with mood creating or altering biochemical discoveries, provide a new tool for suppressing dissent in Russia.

One of the CIA's documents is a 200-page account of Soviet perversion of psychiatry and computers into weapons of political repression. The account was smuggled out of Russia by friends of some of the KGB victims.

It stresses how the new technology, symbolized by computer power, is becoming the operative arm of the Soviet government's program of locking political dissenters in mental institutions.

A conclave of the Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia, in Frankfurt, Germany, issued a little-noticed but moving "Declaration to Christians of the Free World" last year

about the new method of destroying dissent in Russia. In their opening paragraph, the Bishops warned:

"Terrible news has reached us from Russia. Religious people, and those citizens vindicating their right to think otherwise than in terms of party directions, have been whisked away to so-called 'Special Psychiatric Hospitals.' Subjected to drugs, they are numbed and can no longer defend their faith."

The Declaration of Frankfurt never caused much of a stir in U.S. official circles until recently when a Soviet defector revealed that the Russians were using Western-made computers to gather information on all dissenters as part of their new drive to destroy all internal political dissent.

Soviet computer specialist Alexander Lerner, dinner host recently to Rep. James H. Scheuer (D-N.Y.), who was expelled for the meeting, confirmed the use of computers by the government there to smash dissent.

Rather than be a party to the Kremlin's effort to control the minds of Russian citizens, Lerner risked being sent to a mental institution himself by signing an open letter with eight colleagues appealing for support to leave the country.

Lerner in his talk with Americans furnished details of the 'Special Psychiatric Hospitals,' collaborating with the KGB and their use of computers, in Moscow, Leningrad, Kaluga, Minsk and other cities.

With the Russians seeking to purchase upward of 15,000 computers in the U.S. and Western Europe over the next five years, Soviet defectors have warned that many of these will be put to work controlling and suppressing dissent within the Soviet Union.

The American-made computers, they report, also are being sought for use in the Soviet's space and weapons programs which could greatly endanger this country's security and lead in several strategic fields.

The importance that the Soviets give to computers and their operations is indicated by the swift reaction of the KGB to Lerner's meeting with Rep. Scheuer. Scheuer on the spot. In their questioning

of Scheuer, KGB officials appeared a lot more interested in what information, if any, Lerner might have passed on about what Soviet computers are being used for than anything else.

The incident and the raising of the moral issue have given Defense Department officials, who have been opposing the sale of American computers to the Soviets on security grounds, new hope that the State and Commerce departments might withdraw their support for sales to the Russians.

Instead of supporting computer sales to Russia, the Defense Department officials argue that the State Department should be going all-out to support an international move to condemn the Russians' perversion of computers and psychiatry into tools of political repression.

The Canadian Psychiatric Association, on the initiative of Dr. Norman B. Hirt, of Vancouver, has called on all medical and psychiatric societies—including the World Health Organization of the United Nations—to denounce the Soviet's new form of tyranny.

The move has been getting good support from most Western governments except the United States. Dr. Henry Kissinger, the President's chief foreign policy-maker, reportedly has blocked support on the grounds "such action might jeopardize relations with the Soviet Union." The President must now decide whether this policy will be applied to computer sales.